REMARKS

Claims 1-28 are pending in the application. Claims 1-2, 6-19 and 23-28 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Shima (U.S. Patent No. 6,333,789) in view of Lawande et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,219,697). Claims 3-5 and 20-22 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Shima (U.S. Patent No. 6,333,789) in view of Lawande et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,219,697) further in view of Kimura Shuji.(J.P. Patent No. 10-040044, hereinafter "Kimura").

The Applicant thanks the Examiner for the telephone interview on October 15, 2002. During the interview, the Examiner indicated that the Claims would distinguish over the prior art if amended to more clearly define the Applicant's claimed "identifier included in the request".

The Applicants' claimed invention is directed to Simple Network Management Protocol (SNMP) requests which are requests to retrieve or modify objects (for example, text strings, counter values) stored in a managed element. The SNMP requests are prioritized based on a user identifier in a network management message wrapper included in each request. The user identifier identifies the user of an application from which the request was sent. (*See* Applicants' Specification Fig. 3 and Page 7, lines 7-16.)

The cited prior art, Shima is directed to a method for prioritizing printer requests issued to a network printer based on the type of information included in the printer request. Each printer request is directed to a predetermined logical channel assigned to the type of information. (*See* Fig. 2A; Col. 5, lines 31-41 and Col. 8, lines 27-31.)

The cited prior art Lawande is directed to a method for operating the Internet Protocol over a high speed serial bus by integrating the IP protocol and the IEEE 1394 protocol. The IEEE 1394 operates as the physical layer and the data link layer. The IP protocol operates as the transport layer.

In contrast to the cited prior art, the Applicants' claimed invention assigns a priority value "dependent upon a user identifier in a network management wrapper included in the request, the user identifier identifying the user of an application from which the request is being sent" as claimed by the Applicants in base Claims 1, 18, 27 and 28. The combination of Shima and Lawande do not teach or suggest the Applicant's claimed invention for assigning priority dependent upon a user identifier in a network management wrapper included in the request.

Shima discusses assigning priority based on type of information in the request only. Lawande does not even suggest the need for prioritizing requests. Lawlande merely includes a source identifier in an IP header as required by the IP protocol which does not teach or suggest the Applicant's claimed "user identifier in a network management wrapper included in the request."

There is no suggestion to combine Shima and Lawande. Instead, Shima discusses the advantages to not including priority in the request. (*See* Col. 8, lines 27-30.) Even if combined, the present invention as now claimed does not result as argued above.

The patentably distinguishing language reads in pertinent part

> "assigning a priority value to the network management request dependent upon a user identifier in a message wrapper included in the request, the user identifier identifying the user of an application from which the request was sent;"

The above quoted claim language is in base Claims 1, 18, 27 and 28. Claims 2-17 are dependent on Claim 1, Claims 19-26 are dependent on Claim 18 and thus include this limitation over the prior art.

Therefore, separately or in combination, Shima and Lawlande do not teach or suggest the Applicants' claimed invention. Thus, none of the cited prior art alone or in combination teaches or suggests the Applicants' claimed method for prioritizing a network management request. Accordingly, the present invention as now claimed is not believed to be anticipated or made obvious by the cited art or any of the prior art. In view of the foregoing, removal of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) and acceptance of Claims 1-28 are respectively requested.

CONCLUSION

In view of the above amendments and remarks, it is believed that all claims (Claims 1-28) are in condition for allowance, and it is respectfully requested that the application be passed to issue. If the Examiner feels that a telephone conference would expedite prosecution of this case, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned at (978) 341-0036.

Respectfully submitted,

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Dated: 10/16/02

MARKED UP VERSION OF AMENDMENTS

Claim Amendments Under 37 C.F.R. § 1.121(c)(1)(ii)

1. (Twice Amended) A method for prioritizing a network management request sent by a management station to a managed element, comprising the steps of:

assigning a priority value to the network management request dependent upon a [requester] user identifier in a network management wrapper included in the request, the user identifier identifying the user of an application from which the request was sent; and

scheduling the network management request, by the managed element dependent on the assigned priority value.

3. (Twice Amended) The method as claimed in Claim 2 wherein the step of assigning further comprises the step of:

adding a priority value to an authentication group comprising a plurality of users [user identifications], in an authentication table.

4. (Twice Amended) The method as claimed in Claim 2 wherein the step of assigning further comprises the step of:

adding a priority value to a [source identification] user identifier in a source identification table.

5. (Twice Amended) The method as claimed in Claim 3 wherein the step of scheduling further comprises the steps of:

extracting a user [identification] identifier from the received network management request; and

determining the priority value by using the extracted user [identification] identifier to index the authentication table.

10. (Twice Amended) The method as claimed in Claim 3 wherein the step of scheduling further comprises the step of:

extracting the [source identification] user identifier from the network management request; and

determining the priority value by using the extracted [source identification] user identifier to index the source identification table.

18. (Twice Amended) An apparatus for prioritizing a network management request sent by a management station to a managed element, comprising:

a priority assignment routine which assigns a priority value to the network management request dependent upon a user [requester] identifier in a network management header included in the request, the user identifier identifying the user of an application from which the request was sent; and

a network management request routine which schedules the network management request in the managed element dependent on the assigned priority value.

20. (Twice Amended) The apparatus as claimed in Claim 19 wherein the priority assignment routine further comprises:

a priority value assignment routine which adds a priority value to an authentication group comprising a plurality of users [user identifications], in an authentication table.

21. (Twice Amended) The apparatus as claimed in Claim 20 wherein the network management routine further comprises:

a user identification extraction routine which extracts a user [identification] identifier from the network management request; and

a priority value extraction routine which determines the priority value by using the extracted user [identification] identifier to index the authentication table.

22. (Twice Amended) The apparatus as claimed in Claim 19 wherein the priority value assignment routine further comprises:

a priority value assignment routine which adds a priority value to a [source identification] user identifier in a source identification table.

23. (Twice Amended) The apparatus as claimed in Claim 22 wherein the network management routine further comprises:

a source identification extraction routine which extracts the [source identification] user identifier from the network management request; and

a priority value determination routine which determines the priority value using the extracted [source identification] user identifier to index the source identification table.

27. (Twice Amended) An apparatus for prioritizing a network management request sent by a management station to a managed element, comprising:

a priority assignment routine;

a network management request scheduler;

means, within the priority assignment routine, for assigning a priority value to the network management request dependent upon a [requester] user identifier in a network management wrapper included in the network management request, the user identifier identifying the user of an application from which the request was sent; and

means, within the network management request scheduler, for scheduling the network management request in the managed element dependent on the assigned priority value.

28. (Twice Amended) A computer program product for prioritizing a network management request sent by a management station to a managed element, the computer program product comprising a computer usable medium having computer readable code thereon, including program code which:

assigns a priority value to the network management request dependent upon a [requester] user identifier in a network management header included in the request, the user identifier identifying the user of the application from which the request was sent; and

schedules the network management request in the managed element dependent on the assigned priority value.